

Message Text

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71

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2455

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: VIEWS OF TAMIL NADU CHIEF SECRETARY AND OF GOI

ADVISER DAVE ON SITUATION IN TAMIL NADU

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM MADRAS 335 DTD 17 FEB 76 REPEATED YOU.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRAS 0335

EO 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: VIEWS OF TAMIL NADU CHIEF SECRETARY AND OF GOI ADVISER

DAVE ON SITUATION IN TAMIL NADU

1. POLITICAL COUNSELOR KREISBERG AND I CALLED ON
CHIEF SECRETARY SABANAYAGAM AT HIS HOME FEBRUARY 16
MORNING BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR THE SECRETARIAT.
HE RECEIVED US CORDIALLY AND INFORMALLY (IN HIS
LUNGI)AND, OVER COFFEE, RESPONDED READILY TO
MOST OF THE QUESTIONS WE PUT. WE HAVE REPORTED

SEPARATELY (MADRAS 0333) HIS COMMENTS ON MRS GANDHI'S
CHARGE THAT THE DMK WAS PLANNING ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD
LEAD TO VIOLENCE, ON HER CHARGES OF THE ADVOCACY OF
CORRUPTION AND MALADMINISTRATION. IN CONNECTION
WITH THE LATTER POINT, SABANAYAGAM SAID HE DID NOT
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BELIEVE THE COMMON PEOPLE IN TAMIL NADU WERE VERY

MUCH IMPRESSED WITH SUCH CHARGES; THEY DID NOT THINK THERE WAS ANYTHING UNIQUE ABOUT CORRUPTION IN TAMIL NADU AND, IN ANY CASE, THEY WERE MINDFUL OF THE BENEFITS THEY HAD RECEIVED FROM THE SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES OF THE DMK GOVERNMENT. HE THOUGHT THE GENERAL REACTION IN TAMIL NADU TO WHATEVER CHARGES MIGHT BE BROUGHT AGAINST THE DMK WAS THAT IT SHOULD BE FOR THE ELECTORATE AND NOT MRS GANDHI TO PASS ON THEM AND TO GIVE ITS VERDICT ON THE DMK. HE SAID HE WAS SURPRISED, HOWEVER, AT THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE DMK APPEARED TO BE DISINTEGRATING. BUT IT WAS NOT GOING TO BE EASY TO DEVELOP THE CONGRESS PARTY, EVEN AFTER THE REUNION, INTO A WINNING PARTY IN TAMIL NADU. IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT ALTHOUGH MANY OF THE CONGRESS (O) LEADERS HAVE FAVORED THE MERGER, A LARGE PART OF THE CONGRESS (O) RANK AND FILE IS NOT GOING ALONG WITH IT.

2. SABANAYAGAM SAID HE THOUGHT PRESIDENT'S RULE WOULD LAST FOR TWO YEARS. HE USED A FIGURE OF 6000 TO 7000 ARRESTS, BUT IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER HE MEANT TOTAL ARRESTS OR THOSE STILL IN DETENTION. IN ANY EVENT, HE SAID MANY HAD ALREADY BEEN RELEASED AND HE BELIEVED ALL OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENTS WOULD SOON BE RELEASED AND ONLY THOSE WITH CLEAR POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS AND INTERESTS WOULD BE KEPT UNDER ARREST.

3. SABANAYAGAM DID NOT EXPECT ANY EARLY BENEFITS FOR TAMIL NADU OUT OF THE AGREEMENTS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE ON DISPUTED WATERS, SAYING IT WOULD REQUIRE VERY LARGE EXPENDITURE AND MANY YEARS BEFORE REAL BENEFITS WERE REALIZED.

4. ON THE PERSONAL SIDE, SABANAYAGAM SAID HE HAD BEEN GIVEN A CHOICE OF STAYING ON AS CHIEF SECRETARY OR GOING TO NEW DELHI. AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT, IN CONSIDERATION OF HIS DAUGHTER'S EDUCATION, HE WOULD STAY ON HERE. HE SAID THAT, AS A MEMBER OF A FAMILY WHICH HAS BEEN ACTIVE FOR MANY YEARS IN THE PUBLIC AND CONFIDENTIAL

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POLITICAL LIFE OF THE AREA, HE IS USED TO BEING ACCUSED OF BEING SYMPATHETIC TO ONE POLITICAL PARTY OR ANOTHER; AT VARIOUS TIMES, HE SAID, HE HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF BEING FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO THE CONGRESS, THE DMK, THE DK, AND EVEN THE COMMUNISTS.

5. WE HAVE REPORTED SEPARATELY GOI ADVISER DAVE'S COMMENTS ON THE STATE OF THE TAMILNADU ADMINISTRATION

(MADRAS 0333) AND ON RELEASE OF DETENUS (MADRAS 326).
I FOUND IT INTERESTING ALSO THAT HE SAID THAT, UNDER
PRESIDENT'S RULE, THE AID WAS NOT TO DO MUCH MORE THAN
RESTORE THE INTEGRITY OF ADMINISTRATION
AND HE MADE NO MENTION OF ACTIVITIES IN THE ECONOMIC
FIELD. DAVE SAID THERE HAS BEEN NO LAW AND ORDER
PROBLEM IN THE STATE AND HE DOES NOT EXPECT ONE.
HE SAID HE BELIEVES PRESIDENT'S RULE WILL LAST
UNTIL ELECTIONS ARE HELD, PROBABLY FOR AT LEAST A

YEAR, BUT (IN CONTRAST TO SABANAYAGAM) HE DID NOT THINK
IT WOULD LAST FOR TWO YEARS. ALSO, IN CONTRAST TO
SABANAYAGAM, HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE DMK
WAS DISINTEGRATING.
EAVES UNQUOTE
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